

"How I Make Just As Good Ghosts As Dr. Doyle"

JOSEPH F. RINN, whose office is in the financial district of New York city, recently announced that he would be willing to forfeit a substantial sum of money to charity or to other purposes if Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would meet him in a sort of spiritualistic debate and succeed in making any sort of "spiritism manifestation" which he, Mr. Rinn, could not himself duplicate by trickery.

As might be expected, Sir Arthur ignored the challenge, which arouses Mr. Rinn to remark: "I can make just as good a ghost as Dr. Doyle for the small sum of six dollars."

Mr. Rinn is, frankly, a sort of "gentleman sleight of hand performer." He is a member of the American Society of Magicians, which includes on its roster such well known names as "Herrmann the Great," "Kellogg" and others who amuse large audiences with their weird skill. Mr. Rinn, however, practices magic for amusement in a sort of mood for scientific investigation as opposed to psychic research. He is a skeptic, naturally; yet he has a great respect for the creator of Sherlock Holmes. He feels toward the distinguished visitor to America, he declares, as he might toward a beloved friend who is mistaken.

And he proceeds to say:

By Joseph F. Rinn.

FOR the small sum of six dollars any one may entertain any of Sir Arthur's spirits and put them through amazing tricks. And, the six dollars once expended, there will be no further expense for additional manifestations.

All that is necessary for an ordinary materialization is a slender, collapsible steel rod, divided into twenty projecting sections so equipped that it can be extended or contracted at will by a pressure of the hand holding it.

This rod may be had for \$5 from any reputable dealer in the paraphernalia of the magicians. It is one of the adjuncts to every magician's manipulations.

With still a dollar to spend a large roll of gauze, a jar of phosphorescent paint and a rubber glove may be acquired. There will be a few pennies left out of the original capital of \$6, and yet the ghost now will answer the investor's summons.

By ghost, of course, I mean "spirit." There is a distinction with a small but important difference. The Antigonish ghost went abroad. The spirit performs only for the medium and wanders about in a limited area. The ghost is seldom seen, while the spirit must be. Hence the phosphorescence.

There must be a cabinet, of course. This is simply constructed of black materials which will not reflect the light. It is best that the rugs on the floor be dark and that there be no pictures covered with glass or mirrors. Reflections sometimes are disturbing.

With these preparations the company may be assembled. There must be two confederates. One will remain with the audience—perhaps the one under whose auspices the seance, or demonstration, is being given; the other, man or woman, is to be the medium. What the circumstances of the meeting may be depends, of course, upon its object and its participants. I have mostly amused myself with friends or observers who wish solely to be entertained, who do not believe and who most certainly have not been assembled under any pretense other than that the spirits I may produce would come well within an Eighteenth Amendment devoted wholly to ethereal spirits.

However, we may presume that the audience in this demonstration is made up of the usual mixture—those who believe,

those who don't and those who don't know whether they do or not. Among them always are those who approach the critical moments in flippant pretense. These usually are the "true believers." Even I, who make my own ghosts and provide them for my friends whenever they feel as if they might want them, do not look upon Sir Arthur Doyle's faith with ridicule or with suspicion. I may deplore, but I admire his faith, and I even wonder about it.

There are no tables in the room—or, if there are, they are placed against the walls. The spirit must have free clearance—room to jump around if any of the audience become hysterical and do unexpected things. For the medium in such manifestations becomes the spirit, unless more elaborate preparations are made and the spirit is a third party.

Let us consider that such a group as I have indicated has assembled. There must be, of course, a bit of conversational prelude. Just as the musicians "tune up" not only to get their instruments to harmonize but to bring themselves into the "atmosphere" of their musical moods, so



Dr. Carrington testing, in his laboratory, a new device to detect "light magnetism"—a device which would spoil Mr. Rinn's demonstration, perhaps.

must such an audience be "tuned up." One must tell the other how unbelievable all such things are, and the other must protest that perhaps they are not so unbelievable after all.

The principal confederate—the stage manager of the affair—will deftly guide these conversations into serious trend. He will lead one or another to relate experiences, or he will himself deliver a dissertation upon the mystery of the psychic and the constant presence of the unreal at the very verge of the real.

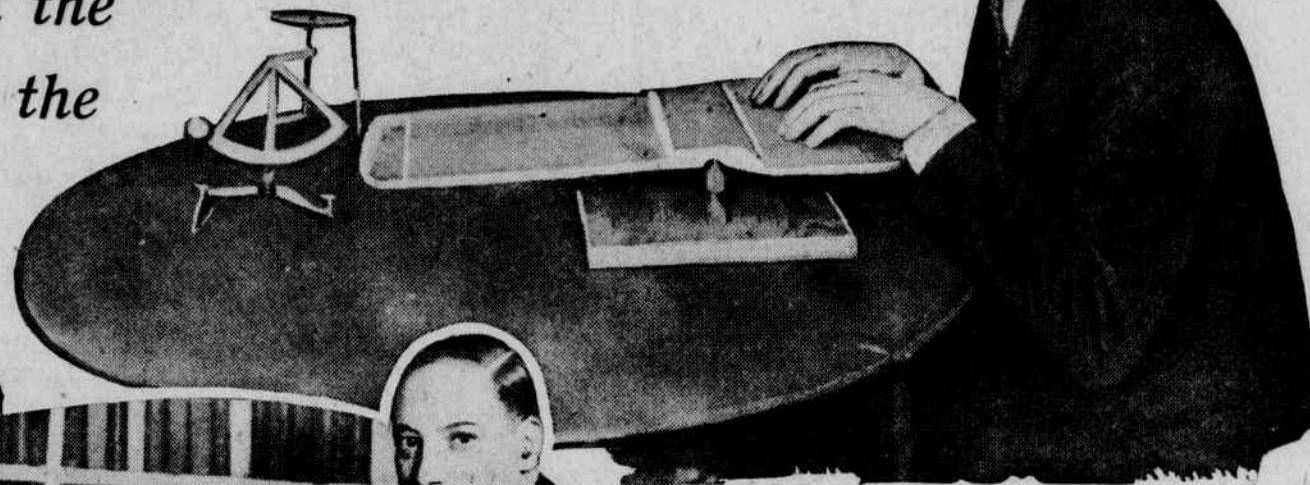
The human soul and mind are mystical. There are none of us who do not fear to confront the unknown. The human abhors the thing it cannot understand just as nature abhors its vacuum. It is not long, with the conversation started along the proper channels, before any group, even if it be made up of skeptical scientists, unbelievers bent upon research or amusement only, becomes subconsciously prepared for the weird. Then the master of ceremonies gives his signal and quietly proceeds to dim the lights.

It was in the old, long ago days of black magic that the pretense of dimmed lights was born. It has served spiritualism well for many centuries. We unconsciously expect ghosts to appear only in the dark. The understanding that spirits must be entertained only in the dark is inherited. One faint light, casting flickering gleams, must be left. No light at all is forbidding.

While the lights are being dimmed the medium displays a disposition to become entranced. Whatever the personal method of the master of ceremonies, by his direction she, if the medium be feminine, begins to show signs of entering into communion with those indefinite phenomena of the unknown.

In her hand, or in a handy opening in her dress, she has concealed the gauze which has been saturated with the phosphorescent paint. This gauze, also previ-

With a Little Steel Rod and a Roll of Gauze Any One, the Magician Says May Bring the Spirit From the Cabinet and Learn the Secrets of the "Unreal"



Mr. Rinn, at left demonstrating "slate writing" by a "medium." The room is supposed to be dark.

Above is Dr. Hereward Carrington of the Society for Psychic Research with one of the society's appliances which detects false "table rappings."

Slowly now the medium lifts an edge of the gauze, spreading it as she does so, until it seems to the interested audience that a form is arising from the floor—a form that casts strange glints and seems to be made of subdued fires.

The medium so places herself that as she lifts the gauze its folds envelop her. She slips her arms through the armholes and draws the hood of the flowing gown over her head and face. Then she is ready for the next stage of the "manifestation."

The name of the person to be summoned from the hereafter is called again and again by the master of ceremonies. Now the medium, with proper modulations of voice, answers—and steps out of the cabinet.

The program from this moment on always varies according to the circumstances which have brought the group together. Perhaps there are conversations with the spirit. Perhaps the spirit is merely an unidentified one there to be cross examined—to answer random questions. Or perhaps it is to be Edgar Allan Poe or Mark Twain, or still, a relative of the one for whom the whole affair has been staged and who has come accompanied by skeptical friends.

The spirit does not remain long. In a few moments some cynical mind will be prompted toward sly investigations which might be embarrassing. While the awe still grips the audience, skeptics and all, the spirit shows signs of relapsing.

The medium draws in her arms and allows the glowing gauze to sink again to the floor. Disengaging herself skillfully, she gently brings the gauze into a ball again and leaves it glowing on the floor, in the center of the room, or at the cabinet door, while she slips into the seat she had formerly occupied.

It is now the steel rod and the rubber glove are brought into play.

The spectators still are intently watching the glowing illusion. They are wondering, perhaps, what the secret is—what the solution is. They are certain there is no apparent trickery—for they can, now that the gauze ball is on the floor, distinguish the medium sitting in her chair still in a trance. The host, or the master of ceremonies, is in his place within the circle or close to some other member of the group who can vouch that he did not leave his chair or have any part in the strange happenings.

But the master of ceremonies is busy,

nevertheless. He brings forth surreptitiously the rubber glove, which has been covered with a black handkerchief, and attaches it to one end of his steel rod, which still is contracted. To the corner of the handkerchief there is attached a black silk thread which plays out as the rod is quickly extended, until the glove, still hidden by the black handkerchief, is suspended somewhere over the center of the room.

Then the silk thread is pulled suddenly and the handkerchief drops from the glove, revealing in the air a weird hand, apparently floating, shining dimly, as does the gauze ball on the floor where the medium left it.

While the master of ceremonies is drawing in the black handkerchief by pulling in his invisible thread the hand floats about over the heads of the audience, gradually settling to the floor, where it appears to grasp the glowing ball.

Tiny black hooks have been fastened into the fingers of the glove and quickly these catch in the filmy gauze. The hand that holds the steel rod and thus directs the mysterious hand is expert. It knows how to manipulate the stuffed rubber glove so that its tiny hooks will fasten well into the ball of gauze and lift it intact.

Slowly, with many wanderings about the room, the eerie hand settles down again, this time until it gradually settles either on the floor close beside where the medium now sits, or in her lap. Her hands, still covered with black, fold around the two bits of fire and gradually extinguish them—the glove and gauze are enclosed and the phosphorescent glow is extinguished.

With a dexterous jerk the medium hides the gauze and the glove within her dress or under her body—and then gives audible sign of "coming to."

While she recovers her senses the master of ceremonies draws in his rod and pockets it. The lights are switched on; the medium enacts the final stages of her gradual recovery—and the materialization is over. Nine times out of ten the seance has been a success and many of the skeptics among the witnesses are half convinced.

There are countless variations of this simple operation, of course. If the occasion is sufficiently important—or the object worth while—a much more elaborate and intricate materialization of the spirit may be engineered. Thousands of dollars may be spent in such an instance. It is possible by a clever manipulation of mirrors and



Joseph F. Rinn, who has assured Sir Arthur Doyle that he can produce a good ghost for \$6.

the proper placing and preparation of trap doors to materialize a talking, writing and otherwise performing spirit in broad daylight in a room well filled with investigators who do not believe and who are of that intellectual mold which would not permit them to believe even the utmost in evidence.

Mirrors, for example, may be so arranged in a large room with proper furnishings so that their very presence cannot be easily detected. They may be made to reflect the presence of a person who actually is in another room or concealed behind unnoticed draperies. Or they may be so arranged that a person participating in the demonstration may seem to completely disappear while apparently stepping across the room.

In fact, there is almost no elaboration of the simple procedure outlined above which is not possible, and by which any phenomena of Sir Arthur may not be duplicated.

In the meantime, however, Sir Arthur has manifested extreme interest in the mechanical features of the laboratory of the Psychical Institute presided over by Dr. Hereward Carrington, who has participated in many of Dr. Doyle's researches. In this laboratory the society has developed many contrivances calculated to thwart just such impositions as Mr. Rinn declares are so ridiculously easy to arrange.

Here many mediums come to grief, while some pass strange tests. The delicate instruments are the productions of scientists in many parts of the world. Almost every "seance" situation may here be subjected to test by a machine that will record even the emotions of the medium, the "arrival and departure" of the unseen spirit—in fact, even the emotions of the seance.

EXPERIMENTS have shown that pigeons are able to outstrip the fastest express trains, although on the average they fly at the rate of only thirty-four miles an hour. A French expert expresses the opinion that they can attain a velocity of more than seventy miles an hour. They are said to be unable to fly long distances in a perfectly straight line; apparently they are easily driven aside by shifting air currents.